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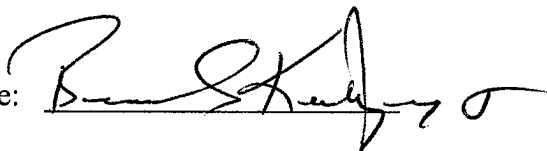
# THE MISSING PRINCIPLE OF WAR

By

Bernard E. Kulifay, Jr.
Colonel, United States Army

A paper submitted to the Facility of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the
requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the
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15. Abstract: The nine principles of war have guided American military doctrine since 1921. However, these principles since their formulation eighty years ago, have not accounted for the human dimension of war. Major military operations and campaigns are not won or lost with machines or new technologies, but with people. The human factor is the most important element on the field of battle. Military theorists, historians, and leaders have indicated that high morale is the single most significant attribute a nation and its military forces can have to succeed in war. Morale, on the surface, appears to be easily understood, but, in reality, it is a complex term that does not lend itself to a simple examination. Morale is the conceptual measure of the human will. It is the abstract calibration of the determination of an individual, unit, army, or nation to achieve its intentions. While abstract, morale is something that you maintain, protect, and attack. Military forces from other nations such as the United Kingdom, Australia, China, and Russia consider morale as a principle of war. Perhaps the time has come for the United States to adopt morale as the tenth principle of war. The adoption would ensure that the importance of the human dimension of war is not lost as emerging technologies push in the direction of dehumanizing the battlefield. Morale has endured the test of time and proven itself in war. It should be considered a principle of war.

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Abstract of


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The nine principles of war have guided American military doctrine since 1921. However, these principles since their formulation almost eighty years ago, have not accounted for the human dimension of war. Major military operations and campaigns are not won or lost with machines or new technologies, but with people. The human factor is the most important element on the field of battle. Military theorists, historians, and leaders have indicated that high morale is the single most significant attribute a nation and its military forces can have to succeed in war.

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Military forces from other nations such as the United Kingdom, Australia, China, and Russia consider morale as a principle of war. Perhaps the time has come for the United States to adopt morale as the tenth principle of war. The adoption would ensure that the importance of the human dimension of war is not lost as emerging technologies push in the direction of dehumanizing the battlefield. Morale has endured the test of time and proven itself in war. It should be considered a principle of war.

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# Introduction

Our men and women in military uniform are the most treasured resource the United States has to carry out the National Security Strategy (NSS) and National Military Strategy (NMS). The key to supporting our NSS and NMS lies in Joint Pub 3-0, *Doctrine for Joint Operations*. This document provides the operational level commander (e.g., Combatant Commander-in-Chief, Joint Force Commander) basic guidelines on how to employ the United States' armed forces in war. Within this framework are nine principles of war. [1]‡ These principles are essential components of warfighting doctrine, providing the operational level commander a foundation on which to lead joint forces, and apply operational art in planning for major operations and campaigns.

Curiously, these nine principles do not account for the human dimension of war. Although military theory, history, and great commanders through the ages have stressed that the most important factor on the battlefield is the human element, our current principles of war focus on more tangible, controllable matters such as *mass*, and disregard the abstract and unpredictable nature of the human component. Hence, if the human dimension is one of the most important factors in war, why do the nine war principles neglect this significant element? Should a tenth principle of war be added to reflect this shortcoming? If so, what should it be?

This paper supports morale as the missing principle of war. It embraces it as a fundamental maxim of war, confirmed by the element of time and battle experience, and proposes that morale could adequately fill the human dimensional shortfall in the current inventory of war principles. Morale and its components are analyzed, along with the writings of several military theorists and historians to support the thesis. The relationship of morale and

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‡ The principles of war: objective, offensive, mass, economy of force, maneuver, unity of command, security, surprise, and simplicity.

leadership is thoroughly explored, as well as a brief examination of morale as a principle of war in other military organizations around the world. Lastly, reasons why the United States should consider adopting morale as a principle of war are presented.

## The Human Dimension of War

*"The human heart is the starting point in all matters pertaining to war."* [2]

*Maurice de Saxe 1732*

The environment of war can be the most stressful, threatening, violent, and dangerous place on earth that tests the limits of men and women as the primary actors on the battlefield. They are the ones operating and maintaining the physical tools of war such as tanks, ships, airplanes, logistics, tactics, force ratios, and so on. Without the human will, there would be no war. Flesh and blood, not machines or computers, fight wars. The human factor is one of the most critical elements in war. It is within the human dimension that wars are won or lost. It is here where military art should focus.

However, in a peacetime environment, our historical lessons and wartime experiences as they relate to the human dimension of war seem to get lost or minimized. The human element is quietly set aside while more definable, measurable, and perceptible analysis and mechanical processes are used to explain the nature of war and the technological road ahead. The United States' overwhelming emphasis and fascination with new and emerging technologies to fight the next battle has overshadowed human factors in war. This is no surprise and perhaps has always been a trend in the development of American warfighting doctrine. In 1989, Roger Spiller, Professor of Combined Arms Warfare, Fort Leavenworth, writing for *Military Review,* pointed out that Ardant du Picq, S.L.A. Marshall, and others have stressed the human element is "the starting point for any study of war, and that while no soldier at war needed convincing, the human dimension was the first consideration to slip from view after the declaration of peace." [3]

Another article in a 1999 issue of Military Review had a similar observation and points out that our "doctrine, so excellent in many respects, suffers greatly from its neglect of the human factor in war . . ." [4] The human dimension of war receives little or no attention in Joint, Navy, and Air Force doctrine manuals while Army and Marine Corps doctrine does acknowledge the human dimension and its importance in the environment of war. Both doctrines point to leadership as the caretaker of human factors on the battlefield, an issue to be discussed later in this paper.

So what exactly is the human dimension of war and its relationship to morale? The Army identifies three "perspectives" -- the physical well being, mental state, and morals -- that cast the framework for the human dimension of war. It is these perspectives that help guide behavior and actions in the environment of war. [5] These "perspectives" contain elements that shape the human dimension of war. Included are such factors as physical conditioning, realistic training and discipline, self-confidence, esprit de corps, a fighting spirit, courage, fear, values, motivation, stress, enthusiasm, danger, initiative, conviction, and leadership to name just a few. It is these elements that influence the human will to fight and win our nation's wars. It is the measure of the human will that is the essence of morale. Let's explore this concept of morale further.

## What is Morale?

*"A battle is lost less through the loss of men than by discouragement."* [6]
*Frederick The Great, 1747*

A review of several dictionary definitions of morale reveals a fairly consistent meaning that focuses on the spirits of an individual or group, and some positive acceptance of carrying out a task. [7] The definition offered by Edward Munson, a world renowned World War II historian, based on his examination and investigation of the subject concludes that:

> Morale is a term which should be used to express the measure of determination to succeed in the purpose for which the individual is trained or for which the group exists. It describes the nature and degree of cooperation, confidence, and unity of understanding, sympathy and purpose existing between the individuals composing the group. It is a

fitness of mind for the purpose in hand. It is a sense of solidarity of strength and purpose, and ability to undergo in the accomplishment of a common cause. It rises and falls from causes which intelligent analysis can usually detect, and which when once detected are usually capable of being corrected. [8]

The following list summarizes the major factors of morale as synthesized from the above definition and identified in several other works on the subject.

*Factors of Morale*[9]

- Reason and purpose, a vital cause or ideology
- Achievable objectives and a feeling of contribution towards it
- Quality of leadership, confidence in leaders
- Esprit, team building, and pride
- Realistic training, discipline and self-confidence
- Aspects of combat – preconceptions, stress, and behavior
- Information, knowledge of what's going on

- Primary groups and unit cohesion
- Fighting spirit, courage, motivation, battle success
- Public opinion and support, national will
- Moral, religious values
- Traditional MWR activities - mail, mess, food, pay, medical, billeting, etc.
- Quality of equipment, tools of war
- Background and demonization of the enemy
- Military socialization and personnel policies

The factors of morale are wide and varied. Many are synonymous with the elements of the human dimension. A majority of these factors acting alone do not give us high or low morale. However, it is the positive or negative interaction of these conditions from which morale emerges. Perhaps the best way to summarize this is by saying morale is the linchpin in the human dimension of war. It is that multi-dimensional gauge of the human condition. It is the un-quantifiable measurement of the will to fight or to yield and all of its components and influencing elements that make-up the human dimension of war.

So, how important is morale in war? Does morale win wars? Let's look at military theory to find some answers.

# Military Theory and Morale

*": . . the underlying logic of human nature . . . has not changed throughout history."* [10]
*Michael I. Handel, 1996*

Military theorists, historians, and the Great Captains through the ages have identified morale throughout the conflict spectrum and levels of war -- strategic, operational, and tactical -- as being critical in shaping the human dimension of war. The nature of morale was either viewed as something that must be instilled, maintained, and protected in one's own forces in order to win the war or as something that must be attacked in the forces of one's enemy in order to defeat him. Sun Tzu wrote about morale in the *Art of War*. He said, "he whose ranks are united in purpose will be victorious . . . and that an indispensable preliminary to battle was to attack the mind of the enemy." [11] Throughout his treatise, Sun Tzu was very sensitive to the concept of morale either to harmonize or demoralize the people at all levels of war.

The search for answers as to why America lost the war in Vietnam is still debated today. The factors of morale -- national unity, public opinion and support at the strategic level -- have often been cited as one of the major reasons why the United States lost in Vietnam. It is clear that the North Vietnamese were sensitive to the will or state of mind of the United States government and the American people. The results of the 1968 Tet offensive on the United States caused President Johnson to comment ". . . I was surprise and disappointed that the enemy's efforts produced such a dismal effect on various people inside the government and others outside whom I had always regarded as staunch and unflappable. Hanoi must have been delighted; it was exactly the reaction they sought." [12] The negative reaction of the United States congress and American people, as a result of the

1968 Tet offensive, eventually led to the American withdrawal from Vietnam. So Hanoi's attack on the national morale of the United States certainly accelerated the end of the war. [13]

Clausewitz in *On War* said, "the moral elements are the most important in war." [14] The word "moral" according to the *On War* editors was also translated to mean "morale, moral, and psychological." [15] In book three of *On War*, Clausewitz devotes several chapters to morale when he discusses moral factors, moral elements, and military virtues. The spirit of the military and its people, courage, esprit de corps, cohesion, and enthusiasm, to name just a few, are recurring themes throughout these pages. [16] Clausewitz discussed defeating an enemy by exerting the right amount of force to equal his capability to resist. One of these elements against which force should be applied is "the strength of his [enemy's] will." [17] This idea of attacking the enemy's "will" or morale is further illustrated when Clausewitz identifies the factors that lead to victory.

1. The enemy's greater loss of material strength
2. *His loss of morale* [emphasis added]
3. His open admission of the above by giving up his intentions [18]

During the buildup in the Persian Gulf War of American and coalition forces, the Iraqi army was publicized as the 4th largest in the world with modern equipment and trained, experienced soldiers from the long war with Iran filling the ranks of their military forces. However, the Iraqi Army was defeated in less than one hundred hours on the ground. Why did the war end so quickly? Did the reputation of the United States as a world super power intimidate the enemy into giving up? Was it the major air operations that led to the swiftness of the Iraqi defeat? Was it operational art on the ground that ended the war in one hundred hours? The answer is yes to all of these events. Each played a part in the coalition victory. However, it was the Iraqi Army's lack of spirit, esprit de corps,

unit cohesion and the absence of many other positive morale factors that led Iraqi soldiers and their units to surrender without fighting. This is evidenced by the thousands and thousands of Iraqi soldiers -- complete units -- who laid down their arms, refusing to fight. The number of enemy prisoners of war (EPW) was "over 69,000 . . . the largest number of EPWs captured and interned by the US since World War II . . ." [19] It was a lack of morale that led to the Iraqi defeat so abruptly.

Jomini in his treatise on war talks about the importance of morale when discussing strategic and operational military art in what he refers to as "grand tactics." [20] He essentially says the art of making war at all levels relies on those factors that "grand tactics" has seemingly little control over. These factors he alludes to are those which we have identified as elements in the human dimension of war and the interrelationship of these factors to morale. The core issue is captured when he says, ". . . but it is the morale of armies, as well as of nations, more than anything else, which makes victories and their results decisive." [21]

So does morale win wars? Let's continue to search for an answer while we further explore morale in war.

### Morale in War

*"You are well aware that it is not numbers or strength that bring victories in war. No, it is when one side goes against the enemy with the god's gift of a stronger morale that their adversaries, as a rule, cannot withstand them."* [22]

*Xenophon to Greek officers in 401 B.C.*

Through the ages, the value of morale has been repeatedly demonstrated as a decisive factor in fighting engagements, major operations, and campaigns. The annals of time are replete with examples of nations and their militaries that were either evenly matched or were disadvantaged in some way (e.g., outnumbered, outgunned), but were

successful in war because of their determination. In other words, their will to succeed as reflected in their higher morale.

For example, in 331 BC in the Battle of Gaugamela, Darius had a three to one advantage (150,000 vs. 47,000) in infantry and cavalry, but Alexander prevailed due to the morale of his soldiers and their units. [23]

At Cannae, the Romans had a two to one advantage over Hannibal. However, he was decisive over the Romans, losing only 5,500 of his own men while killing 70,000 Romans in the battle. Hannibal was characterized "as the greatest general of antiquity by reason of his admirable comprehension . . . of the morale of the soldier, whether his own or the enemy's . . . he had the art . . . securing the advantage of morale." [24]

In the Russo-Japanese War in 1905, the Russians enjoyed almost a five to one advantage in trained forces, but failed due to a lack of national will to commit the necessary resources to win the war.

During the Arab – Israeli War of 1973 on the Golan Heights, the Syrians clearly had a numerical superiority in tanks (approximately 1500 to 177) along with better devices outfitted on their tanks for engaging targets at night. Despite these disadvantages, Israeli armor units crushed the Syrian armor forces. Their success can be directly linked to the factors of morale. [25]

Morale directly influences military unit capabilities to fight and win the battles and engagements that contribute toward attaining operational objectives. The synergy developed by individual and unit morale must be harnessed and nurtured at the operational level to fight the theater war. The operational level of war must translate national policies and aims into major operations and campaign plans that 1) clearly identify achievable

military objectives, 2) plainly explain the reasons why their attainment are necessary, and 3) provide the material to accomplish the task. These three items are key factors of morale and provide the basis for building and sustaining long-term morale in a theater of war. Let's explore one example from the Korean War on how morale was used.

The Eighth Army consisting of Korean and coalition forces in December 1950 was in danger of being broken by attacking Chinese forces. The previous operational commander, General Walker, had been killed and was replaced by Lieutenant General Matthew B. Ridgeway, former commander of American airborne forces in World War II. At this time, the Eighth Army was completely demoralized, but quickly regained its fighting will due to several actions taken by General Ridgeway and his staff to improve morale. Two methods were used: first, a series of limited offenses with overwhelming force specifically designed to rebuild unit confidence were employed. These achievable, conservative objectives quickly restored the fighting spirit of the soldiers. Success in battle is a key factor of morale. Secondly, a communiqué titled "Why We Are Here? What Are We Fighting For?" was issued to every soldier in the theater of operations and verbalized down through the ranks. This gave the theater a noble cause (a key factor of morale) to rally around. These actions as well as others to improve the fighting spirit of the army resulted in the Eighth Army regaining the initiative. [26]

Morale at the operational level can be applied in other ways. For example, ensuring soldiers and units arriving in theater should be properly trained and acclimated before committing them to battle. General Pershing did this with the American Expeditionary Force in World War I. Although strongly pressured by his European counterparts to get his forces into the fight, he resisted committing American soldiers until their training was

complete, enhancing their morale for battle. Morale is also complemented by operational logistics and other combat services to enhance the theater fight. Equipment, clothing, mail, food, medical, and a host of other items all provided by operational services enormously contribute to morale.

High morale at the national level was always taken for granted and did not gain much attention in the 20th Century until Vietnam. Morale made a significant difference in this war. The inability of the United States government to identify vital interests and clear national objectives negatively affected the morale of the people and had ancillary repercussions on American forces. Secretary of Defense Weinberger said "policies formed without a clear understanding of what we hope to achieve would also earn us the scorn of our troops . . . ultimately this course would reduce morale and effectiveness for engagements we must win."[27] The result was the establishment of the Weinberger Doctrine, a tool for the maintenance of morale focused at the strategic level, but one that affects all levels of war. Hence, morale as a measure of public opinion, support, or national will, clearly serves as a reminder of the need for public endorsement and commitment to military forces during crisis or war.

## Morale and the Great Captain Napoleon

There were many Great Captains through the ages who have mastered the importance of morale and Napoleon was one whose military art was the object of intense study by Clausewitz and Jomini. It was their interpretations and impressions of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars that formed the basis of military operations and employment of military forces by the United States and the European community.[28]

Napoleon's experience at all levels of war showed he understood the value of morale. Three of his most famous quotes on the subject are presented here for amplification:

> In war, everything depends on morale; and morale and public opinion comprise the better part of reality . . . Morale makes up three quarters of the game: the relative balance of man-power accounts only for the remaining quarter . . . In war the moral is to the material as three to one.[29]

The importance of morale and its decisiveness in war is well documented. The human factor that morale captures is the most important in war, and morale is the driving force behind the human element to win wars. So, why is morale not a principle of war? Let's return to the issue raised earlier concerning leadership and morale to find one possible answer.

## Leadership and Morale

*"Leadership and morale are inseparable."* [30]

Perhaps the primary argument that has been publicized against morale as a primary principle of war is because of its relationship to leadership. The interdependence between leadership and morale is well documented. Military doctrine and leadership manuals, military theory and recorded history, and other literary work all attest to the mutual reliance of this relationship. Commanders and leaders at all levels of war are responsible for the maintenance of morale. My research indicates leadership is a component of morale, but this does not imply that morale is superior to leadership. High morale is driven by effective leaders, but morale is also generated by identifying achievable objectives on the battlefield, manpower policies that could potentially disrupt organizational unity, public opinion and support that influence the national will as it did during the Vietnam War, and a host of other factors as previously listed. Are these factors of morale also a function of leadership?

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The interdependence between military leadership and many other elements is also well documented such as operational planning, decision-making, and problem solving, to name just a few. Most uniform personnel at one time or another have heard the expression or recognized the truism that everything starts at the top with the commander or leader. Furthermore, leadership is held accountable for everything it does and fails to do.

One could logically link leadership with the current nine principles of war. For example, the principle unity of command "is to ensure unity of effort under one responsible commander for every objective" [31] and the principle of surprise "is to strike the enemy at a time or place or in a manner for which it is unprepared." [32] Is leadership not responsible for the creative and direct application of these two principles? So, morale is undeniably a function of leadership, but so are many other items, to include the current principles of war. The negation of morale as a war principle based on its relationship to leadership is certainly a subjective conclusion and should not be a reason to deny morale as a war principle. Let's briefly review the militaries of some other nations where morale is accepted as a principle of war.

### Morale as a Principle of War in Other Militaries

Military forces from other nations such as the United Kingdom, Australia, China, and Russia consider morale as a principle of war. [33] Air Marshall Evans in his book titled, *War: A Matter of Principles*, says morale was introduced as a British principle of war shortly after the Second World War by Field Marshall Montgomery, who at that time was serving as the Chief of Staff. Montgomery's wartime experiences on the plains of Northern Africa and in the European Theater directly influenced his thinking on this matter.[34] The maintenance of morale as a principle of war is recognized by each arm of the British

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military, although each Service defines the principle slightly differently. The British Army definition captures the essence:

> Maintenance of Morale: Because success in war depends as much on moral as physical factors, and morale is probably the single most important element of war. High morale fosters the offensive spirit and the will to win. It will inspire an army from the highest to the lowest rank...it sensitive to material conditions and a commander should look after the well-being of his men. [35]

Hence, morale is an overarching prescript of British doctrine. Its importance in relation to the other British principles of war is such that Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt, former United States Chief Naval Operations, in an addendum to the chapter on morale in Evans' book wrote "without high morale, even the optimal application of all other principles, defeat often results." [36]

The Australian Army too considers morale as a principle of war. A complete chapter is devoted to the subject in "the Australian Army manual entitled *Combat Power*." [37] Evans notes that back in 1980 the Australian Joint Services Staff College suggested adding "public opinion" to morale as a principle of war. Thus, this principle would read as *morale and public opinion*. This recommendation was no doubt in large part as a result of the United States' experience in Vietnam. However, the proposal was turned down for fear that:

> separating 'public' morale from the morale of the military tended to move away from the concept of national effort – a trinity, an inseparable link. However, the point was made quite unequivocally that the description of the principle of morale should make strong reference to the morale of the population in regard to its support of the government's objectives and to its support of the armed Services. Commitment to war must be a national commitment. [38]

Morale is a principle of war for the People's Republic of China. Mao Tse-tung was responsible for the formulation of China's war principles growing out of his experiences in the Chinese Civil War. It was against this background that Mao refined his theory of

revolutionary war that promised to provide the vision to direct the communist party towards achieving its political goals. The principle of morale is defined as the "spirit of the army."

> In war, quality and quantity of arms are important; without them one cannot win. Even with them, one can lose. The most important attribute of a victorious army is the military spirit. In every conceivable way, thought of possible defeat must be eliminated from the army and replaced with an iron will to win. [39]

Although a revolution in military affairs is underway in China, Mao's teachings dominate Chinese military thinking to this day. [40]

Morale was identified as a Russian principle of war in two articles published in *Military Review* in 1955 and 1981. An unclassified intelligence report published in September 1994 by the United States Army Intelligence and Threat Analysis Center dated September 1994 identified the "moral-psychological" as a principle of war for the former Soviet Union. [41] Another article published in *Special Warfare* in 1997 by Timothy Thomas says the former Soviet Union "considers the concept of 'moral-psychological' preparation of the soldier to be a Russian principle of war." [42] The Thomas article stresses the emphasis the Russian military is placing on the maintenance of their own troop morale (moral-psychological) to prevent an adversary from attacking the psyche of their soldiers as well as preparing techniques and procedures to "influence the mental state of the enemy." [43] Recognition of the "moral-psychological" environment using advanced information technologies appears to be an ongoing operational field in the Russian military. The implications for the United States military, who are progressively moving toward a network centric environment, is worthy of further study.

The 3rd Draft of the Allied Joint Operations Doctrine for North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) forces provides a list of principles for joint and combined operations. This inventory of twelve war principles resembles its American and British counterparts.

One of these principles is called "maintenance of moral," which emphasizes the leader's responsibility to "promote self-esteem, inspire it with a sense of common purpose and unity of effort, give it achievable aims. High moral ... instills courage, energy, and determination." [44] Morale is a principle of war for the combined forces of the NATO community of which the United States is a major partner. Thus, does it not make sense for morale to be an American war principle? Let's review the reasons why it should be.

**Why the United States Should Adopt Morale as a Principle of War**

Principles of war, according to James Dunnigan in his book, *How to Make War,* are "central 'truths' military commanders have learned over the centuries." [45] The Joint, Army, Air Force, and emerging Navy doctrine, along with other published works on this matter, all support the premise that selecting a principle of war is simply based on the richness of the military theory and history behind the principle, and its contribution to winning wars. If this is the case, then morale certainly should be considered a principle of war.

Our most prolific theorists, Sun Tzu, Clausewitz , and Jomini, have identified morale as the most decisive element in war. Our Great Captains have continuously pointed to morale as the key to winning or losing a war. Our post-cold war era writers in the 1990s support morale as a principle of war. In the first chapter of his book, Dunnigan lists and defines twelve principles of war of which morale is identified as the eleventh principle. He says although it "is not generally considered one of the principles of war, morale has always been one of those crucial items that overrule all others." [46] More recently, in a speech given by General Sir Rupert Smith, Deputy Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, at the United States Naval War College, on 17 April 2000, he talked about morale as the key to winning wars. He said, "you must first build within your force the morale and discipline that is a

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prerequisite for success . . . Men of high morale and discipline triumph in adversity . . . With this priceless jewel of high morale you can do almost anything, given time." [47] Our analysis of morale in war clearly showed it as a vital link to victory. In short, morale has the theoretical and historical backing, coupled with its proven success on the field of battle, to qualify as a principle of war. The fact that other militaries regard morale as a principle of war provides additional credentials.

Finally, war is a human endeavor. The application of morale has been shown to be the most important in war from a humanistic perspective and its qualifications based on this alone should qualify it as a principle of war. The American military over the past decades has become overwhelmingly preoccupied with emerging technologies and their employment on the battlefield. As the United States continues to concentrate on a technological path, what happens to war as a humanistic struggle? American high technology weaponry and command and control systems in the Persian Gulf War were given overwhelming credit for the coalition victory. However, will the United States military become so tied to its technology that the human dimension of war is lost upon it? Will growing demands for high technology enhance morale or impede it by obscuring the need to study the human dimension of war? Lastly, will the focus on managing the components of new emerging technology divert attention away from employing the factors of morale?

It is interesting to think about what would have happened if the Iraqi Army had not given up so quickly, and the ground war had dragged on for several weeks or months, resulting in 20,000 – 30,000 American casualties, as some estimates forecasted. Could the United States have maintained its morale under these conditions? Since war is both a

humanistic and material-technological endeavor, the principle of morale is needed to ensure the human element is not overwhelmed or overshadowed by materialistic concerns.

## Conclusion

The time has come for the United States military to embrace morale as a war principle. Military theory, history, and great leaders through the ages have indicated that high morale is the single most significant virtue a nation, its people, and military can have to be victorious in war. War is a human endeavor and morale is a measure of this human endeavor that directly influences the willingness of a people to fight and win. American experiences in Vietnam served as a reminder of its applicability at all levels of war while other militaries around the world recognize the vital importance of morale and accepted it as a principle of war.

To be sure, morale is a very complex element that is not easily defined in quantifiable terms. Perhaps it is for this reason, the American military is drawn toward focusing its efforts on the material characteristics of war that are easier to gauge and comprehend, while human factors are secondary. The United States fascination with technology certainly exacerbates this situation, creating a large shadow over the human dimension of war. Adopting morale as the missing or tenth principle of war would ensure that the importance of the human dimension of war is not lost as emerging technologies push in the direction of dehumanizing the battlefield. Morale has endured the test of time and proven itself in war by winning wars. It should be a principle of war for the United States.

# Endnotes

[1] Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Pub 3-0, Doctrine for Joint Operations, (Washington D.C., 1 February 1995), II-I.

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